(b) During the period 2006-07 to 2008-09, a total of 20 oil and 33 gas discoveries have been made under the Production Sharing Contract (PSC) regime.

Shifting of oil depots to uninhabited area

2119. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to shift oil depots to places which are not thickly populated in order to prevent heavy damage due to accidents; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) and (b) The setting up of oil depots depends on the supply-demand situation of the area to be served and the location is determined by various factors like mandatory clearances from Central/State and local authorities. Generally, the depots are set up in scarcely populated areas. However, it is observed that the density of population increases after the depot is commissioned. Shifting of oil and gas depots from any location depend on the recommendations of respective Chief Inspectorate of Factories of State Governments and State Pollution Control Board. It also, depends on the availability of suitable land from the State Government and financial viability of the new location.

Import of natural gas from Iran

2120. SHRI T.K. RANGARAJAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had any plan to import natural gas from Iran;

(b) if so, whether any agreement in this regard has been signed with Iranian authorities;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the project is still on the anvil;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) to (f) Government is pursuing the import of natural gas from Iran through Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) Gas Pipeline Project. Various important issues, *viz*., pricing of gas, delivery point of gas, project structure, security of supplies, payment of transportation tariff and transit fees for passage of natural gas through Pakistan, etc., are under discussion amongst the participating countries. Such multilateral projects involve protracted discussions, as all the aspects have to be carefully examined and deliberated upon to the satisfaction of the participating countries to protect each country's interests and to avoid any problems in the future in the successful operation of the Project. Finalization of the agreement can be achieved when satisfactory resolution of the issues